

# Sheltering the Left-Out Families of Slum Redevelopment in Addis Ababa

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## Abstract

Addis Ababa has experienced development endeavors under three different ideology phases since its founding. The political economy of the city has gone through imperial, socialist and market-oriented systems of governance. Throughout the time, the city did not stop growing fast as population continued to pour in from other urban and rural areas in addition to the natural population increase for many decades. In the course of expanding, geographically and demographically, basic urban services fell short of serving the population leading to over-crowdedness, insanitary and shanty neighborhoods, inadequate and limited coverage of drinking water, dilapidated buildings and severe shortage of housing, unemployment and deep poverty, and so forth. Eventually, the City Administration of Addis Ababa initiated a comprehensive redevelopment of the city on a massive scale. Among others, the redevelopment/renewal of slum neighborhoods with new housing for the poor was most notable. Old decrepit neighborhoods have been cleared and new developments have been coming in – giving the city a better physical image. Slums have been transformed and some affected residents have moved into newly developed housing delivered under the popularly-known pro-poor condominium scheme. However, there are strong indications that the program is failing in meeting its important goal of housing the poor due to inability to financially access the scheme. Consequentially, those households left-out are losing hope of ever securing a decent shelter in the city. The objective of this article is to identify practical solutions to help affected households shelter themselves in the city they lived for decades, but where opportunities are speedily shrinking. The article looks at the general approaches of the redevelopment/renewal program to reflect on some prior steps to reframe the housing scheme for a better redevelopment of the city whereby its low-income residents can be adequately covered. The article draws from a study of both quantitative and qualitative data comprising primary and secondary data. For the primary data families who were relocated from slum neighborhoods to alternative Kebele<sup>1</sup> (ward) houses were identified and selected for interview. Woreda and sub-city heads and experts were purposively contacted for interview. The results shed light on roles to be played by various development partners to help the poor and left-out families of the society to house themselves under the ongoing development initiatives.

**Keywords:** *Slums, Redevelopment/Renewal, housing, left-out families*

## Introduction

In an effort to improve the quality of life for inhabitants of slums, governments and international development aid agencies have expressed a growing interest in settlement upgrading programs (Eduardo, 2010, pp. xv). For urban areas to accommodate the needs and demands of its poor residents with regard to accessing adequate housing appropriate community development strategies must be designed and implemented. In areas undergoing redevelopment or renewal it becomes too challenging to detail the right way to transform the lives of families within the affected site or location. The process of drafting articulate and appropriate approaches to redevelop a slum neighborhood or city requires a deep understanding of social, cultural and economic life of a multi-cultural society residing in one locality. Slum neighborhoods are areas deprived of infrastructure, sanitation, clean and safe water for domestic uses, decent living places, adequate housing, and secure tenure of land (UN-Habitat, 2009). For city governments it is a prior mandate to tackle those situations militating against poor residents seeking betterment of city life by taking steps toward community participation and ownership of projects to be implemented. Though slum upgrading improves the general outlook of residents and neighborhoods, history tells us that segments of a society are, frequently, disadvantaged as a result. In slum upgrading/improvement, housing assumes centrality with all basic aspects associated with it - i.e. tenure security, water, sanitation, the living spaces and more. Besides, the social attachments and bonds established for decades, economic interdependences developed among families, neighbors and customers call for great caution while undertaking the project.

Among the most important lessons is that to be effective settlement upgrading interventions need to be integrated to address the physical, the social, and the economic characteristics of the new neighborhoods through a deliberate objective to design and implement with the full involvement of the community (Eduardo, 2010, pp. 1). One such strategy has been to promote the use of local labor, skilled and unskilled, in the execution of upgrading projects. The strategy has had the benefit of boosting the local economy via income generation though such effect has tended to be temporary and not long-lasting. Programs like the *Favela Bairro* (Urban Upgrading)

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<sup>1</sup> Kebele (ward) houses are government owned houses and with very low rental fee

program in Rio de Janeiro which promotes the hiring of workers from project neighborhoods for management and maintenance of services such as garbage collection and running daycare centers provide more permanent employment, though not in sufficient numbers to satisfy the needs of all the inhabitants. Other promotions include training women inhabitants in skills such as hairdressing, nail care, and sewing to enable them earn income working from home, but absence of follow-up makes it unclear whether the training actually leads to increased incomes. Mainly the strategies employed have achieved temporary and localized results, particularly during the execution phase (i.e. construction) of the interventions. Housing policies must play a role in transforming citizen's lives towards prosperity. Contrary to this notion, in developing countries, housing policies and programs tend to result from political expediency, rather than a rational and informed analysis of the situation and the demands of individual households for housing (Tipple and Wills, 2003, pp. i). To significantly improve the quality of employment and the level of incomes of the target population it is necessary to implement interventions that go beyond the boundaries of the neighborhoods and are linked to city-wide or region-wide economic development policies or programs.

### **Background**

Slum upgrading is different from slum clearance. The Addis Ababa City Administration took steps to clear the slums of the city and replace same with high-density, multiple-accommodation, high-rise buildings as a deliberate policy of modernizing, preserving and strengthening the primacy of the city as capital of Ethiopia, as well as the leading location of continental and international diplomatic affairs. The project implementation followed processes with the control, support, and intervening guidance of the federal government. Shanty areas of the city were demolished and replaced with new buildings offered to affected families that could afford the new condominium apartments, leaving families that could not to relocate, temporarily, to new slums. Moreover, those who relocated to other government-owned deteriorated houses would keep moving from one accommodation/neighborhood to another accommodation/neighborhood as the slum clearance program continued from the first relocation. Clearly, the households were very poor and could not afford the prices set for the condominium houses, though the first and foremost objective of the upgrading scheme was to re-house slum inhabitants with, expectedly, housing at their level and of their capacity to pay. Unfortunately, this objective went off course as a UN-Habitat (2010) finding confirmed that the poor families affected could not even make the first down payment. Thus, the only means to continue as residents of the city was to accept relocation from place to place according to the choices provided to them by the project/government. These households strive seemingly endlessly coping with life in temporary locations of the city and becoming 'the left-out families'.

Slum upgrading, as a means of improving/revitalizing a deteriorated urban area, demands a total and comprehensive study of economic, social, physical and environmental circumstances of the affected location such as may be required under a purposeful threshold analysis study. Cultural and social connections of residents will be captured and expressed in terms of economic interdependence and psychological wellbeing. The goal of each project must be clearly stated and defined at the outset: some redevelopment/renewal programs may focus on improvement and provision of basic infrastructures while others may prescribe total transformation to create a modernized neighborhood of the city. Invariably, the lives of many families are affected particularly in the latter case of whole clearance of neighborhoods. In all situations of upgrading the basic components of transformation include infrastructure and utilities - sanitation, water, access roads, electricity and, if required, land tenure regularization and house improvement.

In doing all these, the central element of the development is the *resident*. Their participation is crucial to success in both the conceptualization and the implementation of the project. Case studies on slum upgrading from Latin America indicate that to reap best out of urban improvement projects setting up a strong enabling environment to foster community participation and placing reliable demand-responsive supply-side structure is essential (Ivo and Jeff, 2003). Arnstein (1969) proposed three degrees of citizen participation of eight steps: non-participation (manipulation and therapy), degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) and, the highest level of community involvement in development, degree of citizen power (partnership, delegated power and citizen control).

When it comes to total clearance of a neighborhood in a redevelopment proposal the choices are clear; either resettle residents back to their original location on completion or relocate them permanently to different sites. The first scenario requires makeshift shelter for residents with ability-to-pay for newly built homes which calls for detailed workout of residents' preferences, needs and demands in a participatory information gathering and analysis. The second scenario, in addition to paying for housing units in new locations, leads to costs of social and economic interdependence cut-off from neighbors and neighborhood business ties. For all these, detailed information gathering, analysis and applying suitable procedures is necessary.

### **The problem**

Urban development projects that aim for the improvement of shelter and infrastructure require, as a first step, the

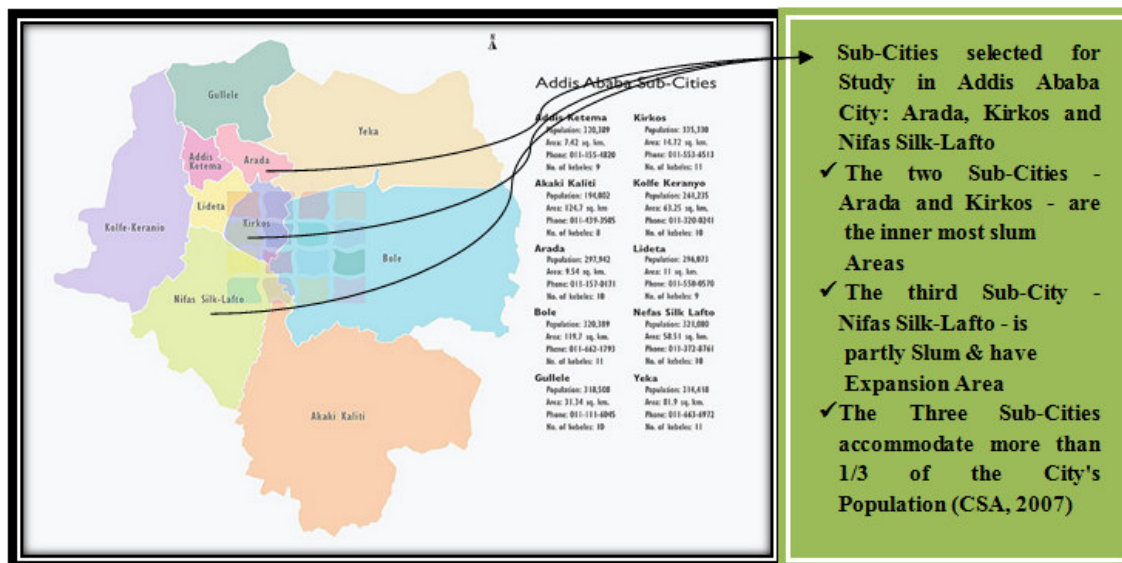
description of the settlements under consideration and a diagnosis of their problems (Ivo and Jeff, 2003, Pp. 9). In the specific case of Addis Ababa condominium housing program, poverty-stricken families who could not afford to pay for replacement units and slum upgrading were subjected to successive compulsory relocations to one successive government-owned shanty house after another in nearby or far-away locations (and villages) within the city. These frequent unsettling moves, in nearly every few months, put the lives of affected families in misery and result to immense social and economic destabilization, thereby impairing the ability of the families to mobilize funds towards buying condominium accommodation. Eventually, they remain 'left-out' without permanent shelter and the concern of this research is to examine why they remain left-out and what mechanisms can be used to correct the irregularity and thus dignify the poor of the society with meaningful housing.

### Methodology

The data, primary and secondary, for this paper forms part of a larger data for an ongoing doctoral research and was obtained from officials and affected families in Woreda<sup>1</sup> 08 of Lideta Sub-City, Woreda 09 of Lideta Sub-City particularly Sengatera Redevelopment Area, and Woreda 09 of Arada Sub-City. Additional data by way of interviews and partly questionnaire survey was gathered from Woreda officials and relocated poor families in Gofa-Mebrat Hail Condominium site. Primary data and interviews were generally purposively noted but randomly selected.

### Findings

Regarding the Addis Ababa urban renewal/condominium housing program the study found that participation of affected families, in discussions with government officials, on the development proposal for any of the localities was poor. No situations of poor families were given needed attention beyond the two directives: move to new condominium units elsewhere in the city or relocate, yet again, to another government-owned sub-standard housing in another slum area. According to data gathered from Gofa Mebrat Hail Condominium residents the initial promise by the City Administration to resettle them back to their original site after its redevelopment was not fulfilled. Rather, and they believe that due to the low level of their participation in the project implementation and poverty, many of them were forcibly relocated to condominium sites far from their original homestead at long distances from the city centre.



**Figure 1:** Sub-Cities Selected for the Study

Source: <http://www.ilic.gov.et>, February, 2016

<sup>1</sup> 'Woreda' means District; taken as the lowest Administrative level since June, 2010.

**Table 1:** Percentage of respondents who were promised to resettle back in their Original Neighborhood after Redevelopment, Gofa Mebrat Hail Condominium

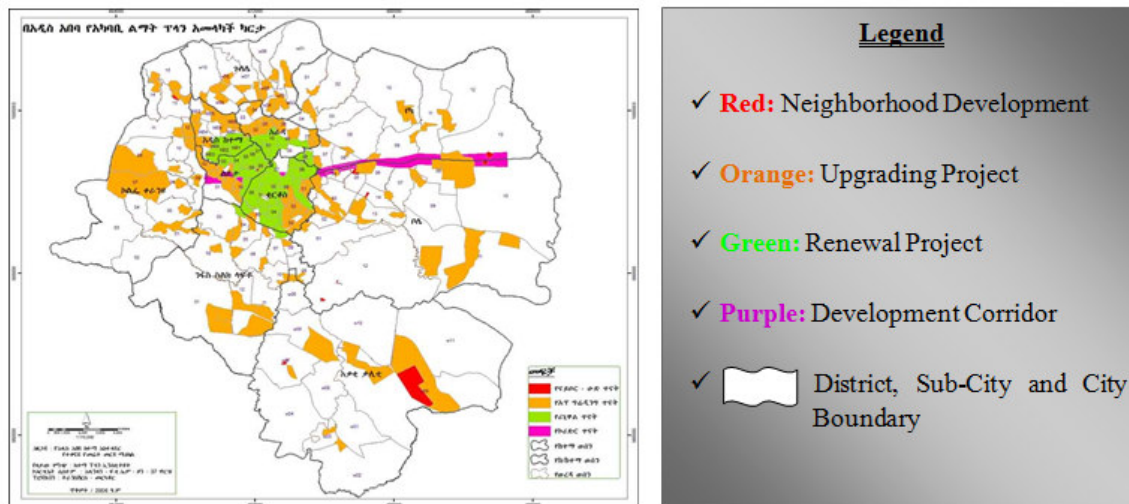
S. No.	Lideta Relocates		Basha Wolde Relocates	
	No. of families	Percentage	No. of families	Percentage
	71	78.9	17	18.9

*Source:* Computed from field data, 2013

Among the ninety households selected for survey in Gofa Mebrat-Hail Condominium, 78.9 percent (71 households) were families who were relocated from different districts (Woreda) in Lideta sub-city and 18.9 percent (17 households) were relocated from Basha Wolde Chilot slum site in Arada sub-city, while the remaining 2.2 percent (2 households) were from other slum areas within the city. All families from Lideta sub-city confirmed the promise to resettle them back into their original neighborhood after renewal of the village. However, the pledge made by the government was not kept and those households who afforded to pay for the down payment remained permanent residents of new condominium site while those who could not bear to yield payments for condominium housing units were moved to alternative dwellings in other slum neighborhoods.

More concerns raised by residents of neighborhoods that underwent renewal encompassed broken promises to inadequate time to relocate, vexatious consequences such as loss of employment, lack of working opportunity in new sites, loss of social ties and economic interdependence of families, impoverishment, shrinking income and narrowing income sources, ill-affordability of condominium housing price, and many more. In conformity with the findings of this article a study conducted by O’Connell (2002) found that ‘skewed central government urban development policy towards the American urban poor which focuses on economics and drives slums (urban poor community) out of cities lacks good governance as there is no concern for voices of the poor’.

Physically, the city may be improving and economic vibrancy is patently visible everywhere one turns in to the capital, yet discontent looms and voices of the poor have been screaming. The question is what the degree of participation was and what the aim and target of the project were during negotiations, discussions and dialogues in the different sub-cities involved in the upgrading schemes.



**Figure 2: Proposed Local Development Plan, Addis Ababa City Administration**

*Source:* <http://www.ilic.gov.et>, February, 2016

Figure 2 shows an overall development need of the city based on the Master Plan; new neighborhood development, urban upgrading sites, areas selected for urban renewal and major development corridors planned to yield significant transformations to the city to guarantee its continuance as Africa’s diplomatic center, as well as emerge as the economic hub of the *Horn*. Following the implementation of the program the physical face of the city showed tremendous makeover with shanty neighborhoods giving way to modern high-rise condominium residence buildings and commercial houses.



Figure 3: Former Slum Area



Figure 4: Sengatera Site, Lideta, Sub-City, New High Rise Condominium



Figure 5: Fird Bet Site, Lideta Sub-City, New High Rise Condominium

## TRANSFORMATION



Figures 4 (Sengatera) and 5 (Fird Bet) show two different neighborhoods within Lideta sub-city after the renewal process: both were slum areas close to Merkato (the biggest commercial market in the country) and the corridor between the National Theatre and Piasa (considered to be the Central Business District of the city). Proximity to these high transaction and movement zones of the city had strategic economic advantage to the slum dwellers/residents whose relocation to other neighborhoods, against their preferences, for resettlement in their original locals, has majorly affected their socioeconomic circumstances. They lament the outcome indicating extreme loss of hope in life and general misery. The study findings show that the strategy of the government to shelter the poor has not been effective, thus resulting in social marginalization – **the left-outs of the sheltering system in the city.**

According to data gathered from respondents who moved to new condominium houses and the left-outs, city officials at different levels had conducted meetings at which they were told their existing neighborhood was about to undergo upgrading/redevelopment and informed about the new condominium sites to be developed for their relocation. But residents of that particular site were not part of planning or implementation for the existing site or new proposed site. It can be said information on what new development will bring to the City as a capital of the nation and Diplomatic centre of the Continent was shared with relocates.

**Table 2:** Slum Dwellers' Representation by Neighborhood Committee

S. No.	1. Three & Above	2. Two	3. Only One	4. No Committee
Frequency	15+12+4 = 31	0+0+2 = 2	2+0+3 = 5	13+18+6 = 37

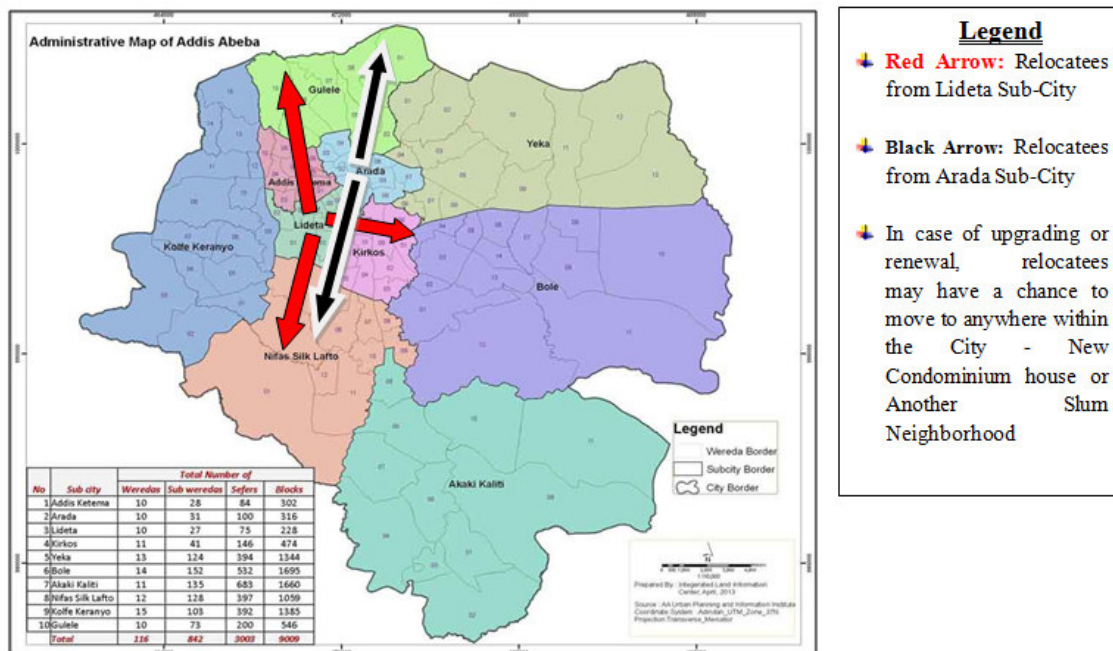
**Source:** Field Survey, own computation, 2013

Direct participation of residents in dialogue with concerned authorities and negotiate their demand is part of societal development in urban upgrading/renewal or redevelopment projects. Representation of residents by their own committee is another form of participation to express and hash out their needs and demands. As urban development and upgrading projects touch lives in the society with diverse needs, demands and attitudes, to set such varied interests to the middle ground calls for bargain and compromise. Clearly, when it comes to outright relocation most families would prefer to remain in their original lives in total opposition to the plan of the City Administration. Data gathered from Gofa-Mebrat Hail Condominium owners indicate that 36.5 percent believe that there were three or more neighborhood committees representing the whole slum community, 8.2 percent acknowledged presence of only one or two committees and the majority 55.3 percent reject the existence of any local committee negotiating for slum dwellers.

In the course of negotiation with government bodies on behalf of the slum dwellers the common request was resettlement back to their neighborhoods after redevelopment, and the coordinated support from government to transport their household items and luggage: none was honored. There was no involvement of the community in designing, planning and implementing redevelopment programs for transformation and improvement of their own lives at, arguably, a minimal resource from the government. Evidences from Mumbai, India, show that more than 60,000 low-income citizens settled around railway facilities were resettled peacefully, well-coordinated, entertaining individual and group demands without too much support from security, police and municipal intervention. Sheela, Celine and Sundar (2002) express the success of the resettlement program in Mumbai in three regards; **one**, it did not impoverish those who are relocated; **two**, the people moved voluntarily without any police accompany; **three**, the resettled population involved in designing, planning and implementing the

resettlement program and in managing the settlements to which they moved. However, the study also revealed some difficulties along the resettlement process which were kept under control and minimized due to vast peoples' participation and own management of the whole process by relocates them.

The case for Addis Ababa showed that many common and individual deep concerns of residents' raised and heard; resistance in various means by residents was expressed but all the process ended up with relocation of residents; some to the condominium houses and others to other slum neighborhoods, and emergence of new developments to old neighborhoods. Urban upgrading and development programs demand multi-stakeholders collaboration as evidenced from the South African experience. The housing support bilateral scheme established in 1994 between the South African Government and the then German Technical Cooperation - currently called GIZ, played the facilitation and coordinating roles taking into account the need to educate thousands of prospective or existing house owners about their right and responsibilities as housing beneficiaries, and empowering certain household beneficiaries, with significant number, to invest in on-going upgrading programs and make improvement in their houses to grow the values of their assets, capacitate thousands of community members through training and awareness to understand the housing policy to enable them to articulate their demands, make informed choices and be part of decision-making processes towards the outcome of urban development programs (UN-Habitat, 2008). Referring to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation the case for Addis Ababa upgrading/redevelopment can be deducted to be classified as a mix of both Degree of non-participation (Manipulation and Therapy) and Degree of Tokenism (Informing, Consultation and Placation).



**Figure 6: Direction movement of Slum Dwellers from Lideta and Arada Sub-City, Addis Ababa**

Source: [http://www.ilic.gov.et/images/Adm\\_Bound.jpg](http://www.ilic.gov.et/images/Adm_Bound.jpg), 15 March 2016

The Lideta Slum Upgrading Project, the first of its kind in the inner-city slum upgrading of the city proposed, discussed and negotiated with residents the government's plan to redevelop. High officials of the city participated in conferences and meetings with residents, frequent and continuous awareness was created and, finally, some families were moved to condominiums and others to other slum neighborhoods. From a single slum upgrading site in Woreda 09 of Lideta sub-city one-hundred fifty-nine families and two hundred forty-one families from Woreda 08 were relocated to various slum sites in different sub-cities within the city as they could not afford to pay for condominium houses. In the same token, one hundred thirty-one households were relocated to other slum neighborhoods from BashaWolde-2 slum neighborhood in Arada sub-city. Incidentally, some of the relocates from Lideta sub-city were placed in a nearby slum site called Sengatera and, in few months, when Sengatera slum neighborhood's turn for clearance came up the poor relocates experienced a second relocation to other parts of the city. To make things worse, the notice was extremely short – given on a Thursday the families were required to vacate by Sunday. No arrangement was made for transport or to cover cost of relocation of families; households were left to their fate. Some were promised rental payment for only three months but was not paid; others were left without shelter.

From Table 3 it can be understood that it is due to lack of affordability that families opt to relocate to other slum neighborhoods and families who spent decades together, developed interdependence, economic and social relations are dispersed within the City to different localities, in some occasions they are placed at the

periphery of the City. Their attachments and interdependence is lost restarting life in new locations without any assistance from any organizations.

**Table 3:** Relocates of Lideta and Basha Wolde-2 Slum Neighborhoods, Old and New Slum addresses

S. No	Relocates from Slums of Different Sub-Cities in Addis Ababa					
	Lideta Sub-City			BashaWolde -2		
	Woreda 09 /Old/	No. of Households /HH/	Moved to Woreda/ Sub-City	Woreda 09 /Old/	No. of Households /HH/	New Address/Woreda/Sub-City
	Woreda 09	12	08	Woreda 09	131	Relocated to Various Sub-Cities and Woredas within the City
		16	09			
		17	10			
		27	4			
		15	3			
		19	1			
		24	6			
		2	2			
		7	5			
		4	7			
		16	Unknown			
	Woreda 8	3	Gulele Sub-City			
		9	Kirkos Sub-City			
		10	Nefas Silk Lafto Sub-City			
		219	Different Woredas within same Sub-City			

**Source:** Lideta Sub-City, Woreda 08 and 09; Arada Sub-City, Woreda 09, 2012

### Conclusion

The avowed policy of Government to provide shelter for only the poor slum citizens has not proven capable and, indeed, equitable to all. Consequently, there has always been a rush for the few available units from a multitude comprising a cross-section of the entire socioeconomic structure. Poverty and weak competitive position of most slum households affect their ability to support their case for improved shelter and share generously from the housing program. Indirectly, this reflects a low level of participation by slum citizens in program implementation. The lack of alternative strategies further obliges them to accept the endless cycle of temporary relocation to other slums and deteriorated neighborhoods as the renewal exercise progresses to new sites. This is **the left-out segment of the society**.

However, the study has found that a determined intervention by government and other development partners can enhance slum citizen participation as to improve their ability to hold power and negotiate their rights. In this regard, civil societies can help in training and creating awareness in slum families and can even act as intermediaries to ensure transparency in the process. The study recommends to government to devise a separate scheme for the *left-out households* of the condominium shelter program.

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